

What is claimed is:

1. An information processing apparatus connected to a network having thereon at least one server capable of processing e-mails, and at least one image forming apparatus, the information processing apparatus being capable of transmitting and receiving e-mails, and managing counter information indicating an output state of the image forming apparatus, the information processing apparatus comprising:

a managing device that manages the counter information; and

a time setting device that transmits an e-mail addressed to the information processing apparatus, receives the e-mail, and then sets present time based on time of the transmission of the e-mail, and time of reception of the e-mail by the server.

2. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, comprising an NTP time information acquisition device that acquires time information using NTP, and wherein said time setting device carries out the setting of present time based on time of the transmission of the e-mail, and time of reception of the e-mail by the server, concurrently with the acquisition of the time information by said NTP time information acquisition device.

3. An information processing apparatus according

to claim 1, comprising a storage device that retains time information, and wherein said time setting device sets the present time based on the time information retained in said storage device upon startup of the information processing apparatus.

4. An information processing apparatus according to claim 3, comprising a mail time information acquisition device that acquires time of reception of the e-mail addressed to the information processing apparatus, and wherein said time setting device overwrites the time acquired by said mail time information acquisition device or said NTP time information acquisition device on the present time set upon startup of the information processing apparatus.

5. An information processing apparatus according to claim 3, comprising an update device that updates the time information retained in said storage device in predetermined timing.

6. An information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said time setting device corrects the time information retained in said storage device based on predetermined correction information, and sets the present time based on the corrected information.

7. An information processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said time setting device acquires information of the time from said mail time information-acquisition device when the time

information has not been acquired by said NTP time information acquisition device.

8. An information processing apparatus according to claim 1, comprising a storage device that stores a  
5 history of processing carried out by the image forming apparatus in association with lapse of time, and a notification device that notifies the history stored in said storage device to a center existing on the network.

9. An information processing apparatus according  
10 to claim 1, wherein the image forming apparatus comprises a printing device that carries out printing on a recording medium.

10. An information processing method for an information processing apparatus connected to a network  
15 having thereon at least one server capable of processing e-mails, and at least one image forming apparatus, the information processing apparatus being capable of transmitting and receiving e-mails, and managing counter information indicating an output state  
20 of the image forming apparatus, the method comprising:

a managing step of managing the counter information; and

a time setting step of transmitting an e-mail addressed to the information processing apparatus,  
25 receiving the e-mail, and then setting present time based on time of the transmission of the e-mail, and time of reception of the e-mail by the server.

11. An information processing method according to claim 10, comprising an NTP time information acquisition step of acquiring time information using NTP, and wherein in said time setting step, the setting  
5 of present time is carried out based on time of the transmission of the e-mail, and time of reception of the e-mail by the server, concurrently with the acquisition of the time information by said NTP time information acquisition step.

10 12. An information processing method according to claim 10, comprising a storing step of retaining time information, and wherein in said time setting step, the present time is set based on the time information retained in said storing step upon startup of the  
15 information processing apparatus.

13. An information processing method according to claim 12, comprising a mail time information acquisition step of acquiring time of reception of the e-mail addressed to the information processing  
20 apparatus, and wherein in said time setting step, the time acquired in said mail time information acquisition step or said NTP time information acquisition step is overwritten on the present time set upon startup of the information processing apparatus.

25 14. An information processing method according to claim 12, comprising an update step of updating the time information retained in said storing step in

predetermined timing.

15. An information processing method according to claim 14, wherein in said time setting step, the time information retained in said storing step is corrected  
5 based on predetermined correction information, and the present time is set based on the corrected information.

16. An information processing method according to claim 11, wherein in said time setting step,  
information of the time is acquired using said mail  
10 time information-acquisition step when the time information has not been acquired in said NTP time information acquisition step.

17. An information processing method according to claim 10, comprising a storing step of storing a  
15 history of processing carried out by the image forming apparatus in association with lapse of time, and a notification step of notifying the history stored in said storing step to a center existing on the network.

18. An information processing method according to  
20 claim 10, comprising a printing step of carrying out printing on a recording medium.

19. A program for causing a computer to implement an information processing method for an information processing apparatus connected to a network having  
25 thereon at least one server capable of processing e-mails, and at least one image forming apparatus, the information processing apparatus being capable of

transmitting and receiving e-mails, and managing counter information indicating an output state of the image forming apparatus, the program comprising:

5       a managing module for managing the counter information; and

          a time setting module for transmitting an e-mail addressed to the information processing apparatus, receiving the e-mail, and then setting present time based on time of the transmission of the e-mail, and  
10   time of reception of the e-mail by the server.